

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Churchill Junior High School
3450 Oakview Drive
Salt Lake City, Utah 84124**

November 6-7, 2003



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
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**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Churchill Junior High School
3450 Oakview Drive
Salt Lake City, Utah 84124**

November 6-7, 2003

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, November 6-7, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Churchill Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Bryce Holbrook is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Churchill Junior High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Churchill Junior High School.

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**Board of Regents Appointments*

10/30/03

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Tom Given	Supervisor Transportation and Maintenance
Dr. Sharon Prescott	Supervisor Elementary Education
Bob Ward.....	Supervisor School Lunch

CHURCHILL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Bryce Holbrook..... Principal
Kandie Barber Assistant Principal

Counseling

Stewart Marsh Counselor
Kathy Wirthlin Counselor

Support Staff

Laura Bowden Bookkeeper
Cristine Brimley Principal's Secretary
Debbie Despain Counseling Secretary
Teri Vanderpoel Attendance Secretary
Lisa Whiteley Comprehensive Guidance Clerk

Faculty

Jill Allen	Kathy Henriod	Larry Rogers
Michael Anderson	Kathy Kilminster	Tami Searle
Kelli Aramaki	Brian LeStarge	Cobi Shafe
Gene Bechthold	Jack Marzo	Dave Simmons
Robert Bentley	Julie McDonald	Gail Smith
Heidi Birth	Brandy Moon	Nicole Smith
Toni Blattman	Susie Myers	Susan Taggart
Jeanna Chiodo	Leslie Niemann	Richard Tate
Melody Cook	Kris Page	Jody Lynn Tolley
Julie Decker	Barry Petersen	Deborah Wagner
Sharon Gourley	Mary Richer	Rebekka Ward
Sheri Griffith	Gregg Roberts	Alan Wicklander
Tracy Hansen	Laura Robison	

CHURCHILL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a collaborative environment which prepares students with the confidence, skills and knowledge needed for the 21st century and life-long learning.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We believe . . .

- Students are our focus.
- All individuals deserve respect.
- A positive self-image is essential in reaching one's potential.
- Individuals are unique with varying needs, talents and abilities and deserve opportunities to reach their potential.
- Education provides a foundation of knowledge and skills essential for individual growth.
- Individuals are responsible for their choices.
- Education is a partnership between home, school and community.
- A community that communicates, cooperates and collaborates creates strong, productive partnerships.
- Individuals are entitled to a safe, healthy, orderly environment.
- Learning is a life-long pursuit.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Robinette Bowden, Syracuse Junior High, Davis School District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Stacy Evans, Albion Middle School, Jordan School District

Susan Malone, Midvale Middle School, Jordan School District

Mark Murphy, Mount Jordan Middle School, Jordan School District

Kevin Poff, Mueller Park Junior High School, Davis School District

Vallen Thomas, Lehi Junior High School, Alpine School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

CHURCHILL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Churchill Junior High School was originally called Foothill Junior High School. The building was first occupied on September 7, 1965, with two-thirds of the building completed and a student body numbering one thousand four hundred twenty-one. The school is on seventeen acres of land and has approximately sixty teaching stations within it. The school houses an auditorium, a gymnasium, applied technology labs, a cafeteria, and a library, and has other features such as wide panoramic western views of the Salt Lake valley.

Since 1999, the enrollment has decreased from approximately one thousand to seven hundred thirty-two. Fifty-six percent of the students live in the boundaries and forty-four percent of the students live out of the boundary due to the School Choice Policy. Students are bused from the Kearns area and Emigration Canyon. Other students provide their own transportation.

The ethnic composition of the school community consists of predominantly Caucasian (95 percent), high achieving students with standardized test scores that are above the Granite District average. Special needs populations are served by several programs, such as Access classes, LD units, the MORE program for ninth grade students at risk of not meeting graduation requirements, and the SMART program for at-risk students who do not qualify for special education services.

The form of student government established was patterned after the Utah state government. Although the school is structured as a junior high school with seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students, the faculty and administration have studied and implemented many research-based middle-level interventions. Seventh and eighth grade students are scheduled into interdisciplinary teams for science, English, mathematics, and social studies. The school day is divided into eight ninety-minute classes Monday through Thursday. On Friday, students attend forty-five minute classes, which rotate through all eight periods.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

The faculty and administration are very aware of the declining enrollment pattern. There is a lot of pressure on the staff to recruit students each year. The Churchill on Parade, honors, and GT programs attract students to the school. During the past year, alternative programs such as Utah School for the Deaf and

self-contained special education classes have increased both the number and diversity of the enrollment. Over the past five years, scores on standardized assessments have been above the national average and stayed relatively stable.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Churchill Junior High School is strongly encouraged to continue its efforts to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school. It is suggested that the administrative staff collaborate with the district in designing an effective management system that can be utilized by different stakeholders within the school community. Given the current limitations in data gathering, the Visiting Team was impressed with the data presented, and especially with the analysis of the data presented in the school profile.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- In analyzing student achievement data, the staff should also explore possible correlations between student achievement and other measures of student success, such as attendance, course grades, participation in school activities, etc. The staff has already indicated an interest in researching the correlation between academic grades and levels of proficiency on the state CRT.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The school has a history of successful participation in the accreditation self-study process. It is evident that the majority of the staff appreciates the power of the self-study process and participates in the process at regularly scheduled intervals. Although the Visiting Team was told that parents and community members had participated in the creation of the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs, the Visiting Team saw limited evidence that current stakeholders (parents and community) are continuing to participate in the process.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The school's profile, in conjunction with survey data, supports the school's analysis of historical strengths and limitations. As the school population becomes more diverse with the addition of special instructional units, the staff should re-examine disaggregated data to determine who is learning and who is not learning.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Churchill Junior High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Complex Thinkers
 - Effectively evaluate and integrate information from a variety of resources
 - Apply a variety of thinking processes to resolve complex issues
 - Demonstrate the effectiveness of decisions and solution
 - Demonstrate an awareness of own thinking processes
2. Self Directed Learners
 - Set priorities and achievable goals
 - Evaluate and manage own progress towards goals
 - Take responsibility for actions
 - Make connections between topics and discipline, creating deeper understanding.
3. Collaborative Workers
 - Work toward the achievement of group goals
 - Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills
 - Work as part of a team to achieve consensus
 - Demonstrate flexibility and creativity in thinking process
 - Demonstrate ability to evaluate group work and suggest improvements for self and others
4. Effective Communicators
 - Express thoughts and information in a logical, organized manner
 - Communicates through a variety of means, including written and spoken language and technology
 - Communicate clearly with diverse audiences
 - Communicates clearly for a variety of purposes
5. Quality Procedures
 - Use a variety of resources to create final product
 - Create products that achieve their purpose
 - Create products appropriate for intended audience
 - Demonstrate knowledge of process of evaluation and refinement of product

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The focus group responsible for the mission and belief statements took the existing documents (which were created during the last accreditation process) and reviewed them for current applicability. After getting feedback from various stakeholders, they made some minor wording changes, but kept most of what was already in place. The focus group included parent and student representatives, but they were not involved in the actual revision process. It was suggested that this was partly due to some uncertainty about leadership in the focus group, resulting in a breakdown in communication outside of the faculty group. Their involvement occurred when they were given drafts of the mission and belief statements as asked to give feedback; however, most of the feedback and revision loop was between the faculty members and administration.

Parents and students seemed to be supportive of the mission and belief statements, but it seemed as if they were not involved in the review of the old and creation of the new ones. Parents and students now seem to be reasonably aware of the school's mission and beliefs. They are posted in almost every classroom and in several places in the halls around the school. While few people actually have them memorized, the students do seem to be aware of the emphasis on collaborative work and preparation for the future.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The belief statements do seem to reflect the direction suggested by the mission statement, and they do provide a vision of practices that support student success and learning. It is apparent that many of the qualities enumerated in the belief statements are evident in the practice and culture of the school, but this seems to be more because they are associated with good teaching practices, than because of any direct alignment with the profile or DRSLs.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

There is widespread investment among the faculty and staff in the school's desired results, and there is evidence that the DRSLs' concepts are being integrated into classroom instruction. Although the faculty and staff are invested primarily in the DRSLs, it appears that the DRSLs are not directly related to, or derived from, the mission and beliefs. Students seem to be fairly aware of the DRSL concepts, although there are varied levels of success between teachers and departments when it comes to implementing them.

There is definitely a lack of correlation between the belief statements and the desired results. The DRSLs were created during a process that started from scratch, with the faculty members contributing their suggestions about the “ideal student.” This resulted in DRSLs that are reasonably close to the Utah Life Skills, but they are not directly correlated with the beliefs and do not seem to address any specific needs that were identified in the school profile.

The Visiting Team recommends that efforts be made to align the DRSLs with the mission and belief statements, and to make sure that the DRSLs used are addressing specific needs as identified in the profile.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

There is evidence that the vast majority of teachers and/or departments have aligned their curricula with the Utah State Core curriculum and/or national standards where applicable. Many departments have developed and are utilizing curriculum maps that organize the curriculum around the big ideas of the discipline, ensure alignment with the Utah State Core Curriculum, and guide the sequence of instruction in the classroom. Vertical articulation is beginning in the areas of mathematics, English, and foreign language via a grant obtained by Skyline High School.

The teachers in each department are meeting regularly and collaborating with their colleagues to discuss curriculum. Assessment data are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, and the curriculum is revised in an ongoing process. In addition, the interdisciplinary team structure in place at the 7th and 8th grade levels has provided common planning time in which teachers collaborate to develop connections between and among the various disciplines. Integration of content is less evident at the 9th grade level and in related arts classes, where there is less common planning time built into the schedule.

It is the recommendation of the Visiting Team that collaborative efforts for increasing content integration be continued, with particular attention given to involving teachers of related arts and 9th grade classes. In addition, the Visiting Team recommends a continuation and expansion of the vertical alignment efforts.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

There have been great efforts to develop and implement schoolwide desired results for learning (DRSLs). Originally, the schoolwide DRSLs were developed through a collaborative process using the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) as a starting point. At that time, indicators and rubrics were developed to assess implementation of the DRSLs. It should be noted that parental involvement in the development process was limited.

Currently, the schoolwide DRSLs are posted in most classrooms. The faculty demonstrates a high level of awareness of the schoolwide DRSLs, and implementation of the DRSLs is evident in the vast majority of classrooms to varying degrees. The indicators and rubrics originally developed with the DRSLs appear to be utilized by very few teachers. Some departments have chosen to develop their own rubrics for assessing DRSL implementation. The Visiting Team recommends that all stakeholders review the original schoolwide indicators and rubrics, along with any departmental rubrics, to establish one common set of DRSL indicators and rubrics for the entire organization. It is further recommended that all faculty members implement these rubrics to maximize a collaborative effort to achieve these overarching school goals for learning.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

During the two-day visit, a variety of instructional practices and learning activities were observed. Many teachers utilized best practices of effective instruction including the use of technology, cooperative learning groups, role-playing, hands-on activities, laboratory activities, and student collaboration. Several classrooms utilized traditional direct instruction. The Visiting Team applauds the efforts the grade level teams are making to ensure students are actively involved in daily instruction. Students report that they are learning, and that they enjoy the variety of instructional techniques used in most classes.

In moving to the block schedule during the 2003-2004 academic year, classroom teachers have found it necessary to utilize differentiated instruction to fully engage learners in the extended time block.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Churchill Junior High is currently utilizing some of its professional development resources to assist teachers in expanding their learning experiences for additional hands-on experiences. The professional staff seems to support the professional development, and work collaboratively to share ideas with colleagues. As the school profile has changed recently to include students from the Utah School for

the Deaf and the significant increase of special education students with learning disabilities, the staff may benefit from additional staff professional development for working with these diverse learners' needs.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The professional staff is extremely directed toward high academic achievement. It appears that students have adequate opportunities for instructional assistance and remediation. The Counseling Department sponsors the CONNECT program for a five-week student/parent/counselor workshop using the student planner as a tool for tracking student preparation and achievement. Students and their parent(s) are invited to participate in this after-school program when the student has failed one or more academic subjects during the previous term. Churchill Junior High School limits the number of students/parent(s) that may participate in the CONNECT program to fifteen student/parent teams per quarter. Churchill Junior High School also sponsors and supports the SMART program for students who may be struggling in academic skills, organizational skills, and daily follow-through with school assignments. The PASSKEY program allows students in grades 7 and 8 to receive computer-aided instruction and remediation for core classes they may have failed. The majority of the faculty supports this program, while several reported that the students had the skills and lacked the motivation to turn in assigned work, and hence failed a core course. The students report that this program is helpful to them as they build additional skills for academic success in their core courses. It appears that the majority of the faculty has established time for students who may need additional assistance time before and after school to meet individually and as groups with the professional staff.

The Visiting Team recommends that additional strategies, programs, and resources be researched and implemented to assist students not reaching a minimum of near proficiency on the state criteria-referenced assessments. The professional staff reports that not receiving individual scores back from the USOE on CRTs has placed a burden on departments needing to identify specific levels of student proficiency and need for remediation.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Nearly all staff members have developed classroom assessments to provide them with baseline data and with data showing student improvement in their content areas. While most staff members have written their own assessments directly linked to State Core Curriculum, several areas report that they are using the assessments provided by the textbook publishers that do not have as much of a

direct link to the State Core Curriculum. Churchill Junior High School also participates annually in the SAT 9 for eighth grade students, state CRTs, and NAEP. Churchill Junior High School scores significantly above district, state, and national averages on all assessments. Given the high socioeconomic status of the students attending Churchill Junior High School, scores fall within the expected ranges established. While the expectations for academic excellence and rigor are set high by the staff and leadership, continued efforts should be made to continue academic growth in all areas. With the concerns surrounding NCLB, it will become critical to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for students who are already functioning above grade level and showing proficiency on CRTs. The Visiting Team found evidence of curriculum mapping and instructional alignment in several departments (i.e., mathematics, language arts, and foreign language). This process should be extended to include all departments.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The Visiting Team found evidence that most staff members are familiar with the DRSLs and have incorporated them into their daily instructional practices. While most students were unable to identify DSRLs, it was evident from classroom instruction that lessons are designed with desired results for student learning as an essential objective. The vast majority of staff members have aligned their assessments with instructional approaches appropriate for the content area.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Churchill Junior High School has established a schoolwide grading scale that assures that staff assign grades according to a uniform percentage standard, which is communicated to all students and parents in the student planner distributed at the beginning of the school year. Several staff members report that grades could more accurately align to state CRT proficiencies. The vast majority of staff members report that their assessments are aligned with classroom instruction; however, fewer students report that assessments are connected closely to daily classroom instruction. The Visiting Team supports the focus group recommendation on working to ensure that students can explain the purpose and application of each assessment, and continuing to work on assessing what is taught. As the school profile has changed recently to include additional students with individualized needs, it will be essential to evaluate appropriate assessments for students with more diverse learning needs and styles.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

There is evidence that the immediate past and current administrative teams support quality instruction. The faculty recognizes the benefits that the school received through active grant writing and funding made available by the past administration. Assistant Principal Kandace Barber is a strong force in continuing the rigorous professional development and reflection on current instructional practices.

Although Principal Bryce Holbrook is relatively new to the school, it is evident that the staff is ready to follow his vision for continued school improvement. At the present time, Principal Holbrook reports his vision is still emerging. The faculty recognizes the differences in administrative styles between the past and current principals. However, most faculty members look forward to working with Principal Holbrook.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The leadership at Churchill Junior High School has gone to great lengths to employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative. Interdisciplinary team teachers on both seventh and eighth grade teams report appreciation for the authority given them to make decisions regarding individual student academic interventions. Team teachers report that they receive background information on student behavior and achievement that is used to assist decisions made in the classroom. Although the school community as a whole has much to learn in moving in this direction, the Visiting Team is confident they will continue to improve their methods and professional relations on behalf of students.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

Principal Holbrook and Assistant Principal Barber report that teachers are required to keep portfolios with examples of rubrics, teacher-written assessments, unit plans, etc. Teachers and departments are developing school-level assessments to monitor student progress towards proficiency on CRT tests. Teachers are expected to give pre-, mid-, and post-tests in each curriculum area.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Schoolwide policies and operational procedures are typically consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning. With the implementation of recommendations from this

report, the Visiting Team is confident that under current leadership (both formal and informal), the management, operations, and resources of the school will continue and hopefully surpass their current effectiveness and efficiency.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSs, and school improvement efforts?*

One of the major strengths of the school is the alignment of resources with school improvement efforts. The leadership has created a learning community of adults that models the desired goals for student learning. Teaching staff, parents, and students strongly commend the leadership for the creation of a safe and positive learning environment. All indications were that the school resources were effectively used to create a school where students were safe and were offered a rigorous educational program.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

Leadership has consciously established teams of teachers to ensure that the responsibility for student success is shared. They attempt to communicate to parents and the community at large that their input and participation is important to the success of the school. Interviews with the PTSA indicate a need for the school to ensure that communications reach the home in a timely manner. Interviews with the Counseling Department also echo the need for improved communication with the community. This need is appropriately addressed in the action plan.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team found a positive working relationship among teachers, students, and administration. Students seem to enjoy their experience at Churchill Junior High and participate in a number of schoolwide programs that enhance the school community spirit. These programs include Charger of the Week and the Beehive Credit Union's Student of the Month. Both programs recognize students for their positive contributions to the school community.

Churchill Junior High provides students with programs such as Peer Remediation, Anger Management, and Study Skills classes to help students foster positive relationships within the school community. There are also a number of ways they

seek to support the community, such as food and clothing drives as well as various community service projects.

The teaching staff at Churchill Junior High does a very good job of teaming, especially in the 7th and 8th grade core. There appears to be a good working relationship within departments, and instructional units are planned and shared. There seems to be a need for stronger collaboration among 9th grade teachers, but this might be a result of not having a common preparation time due to lack of proper funding.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

It is evident that the school is aware of the importance of parental involvement as a critical component of education. They seek to involve parents as educational partners through such communication tools as school newsletters, course disclosure documents, school web pages, access to teacher grade books, SEOP conferences, and the School Community Council. There was some concern expressed by the school that parents were not as involved in the SEOP process as the school would like them to be. It is the Visiting Team's recommendation that the school come more in line with the state directive that SEOP conferences be individualized rather than be group-oriented.

It is clear to the Visiting Team that the teachers and administrative staff at Churchill are committed to supporting their students in their educational pursuits. Teachers make themselves available for tutoring help both before and after school several times during the week. The school provides remediation help to its students through such programs as SMART, CONNECT, and PASSKEY. Teachers who are assigned to be grade level team leaders are given lists of at-risk students and discuss them regularly in their grade level meetings. The Visiting Team recommends that they continue such efforts.

Churchill Junior High has an active and supportive PTSA organization that does many things to support the school community. The PTSA recognizes teachers throughout the year and is willing to provide volunteers to help with class and school activities. It was recommended that the school ask the PTSA to assign a committee member to remind parents of their commitment to help on such occasions.

The school administrative staff provides yearly surveys for teachers, parents, and students in order for them to provide feedback about their perceptions of the school community and its services. It is recommended that they continue this process.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school's organizational culture supports school improvement initiatives and professional development. The staff and administration at Churchill Junior High School are committed to continuing professional development by providing and participating in ongoing staff and personal development. Every week, the staff and school leadership are involved in professional development designed to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills for faculty implementation. Facilitated by the administration, these meetings occur each Wednesday and are based on faculty request for support in areas of perceived need. In addition, as the school has moved into creating a framework for teaming and teaching in the block, there has been an effort to provide continuous training in these areas.

It is suggested that, with the momentum of providing sustained quality staff development opportunities, special effort be taken to direct the focus toward DRSLs. It is felt that an effort to focus on the DRSLs will further strengthen the school's abilities to reach goals for improvement.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

It is evident that the school administration actively supports individual and staff opportunities for teacher development. It is clear to the members of the Visiting Team that Churchill Junior High provides a positive and nurturing culture for both its students and teachers. The overwhelming feedback among the teachers is that the administration helps to create the climate for change and continuous improvement in the curriculum throughout the school.

In the past two years, the administration has developed a master schedule that gives seventh and eighth grade teachers a common planning time during which they gather to correlate their efforts in teams. It was observed by the Visiting Team that there is a need for the Learning Disability Self-Contained (LD) teachers to be included in the teams to provide ongoing collaboration for their students' special needs. Also, there have been efforts to do vertical articulation with the Skyline High School (in the areas of foreign language, math, and English) that have proven to be very successful.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

These are not applicable to Churchill Junior High. Most public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through the NAAS, but only by USOE – it is their choice to join or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The schoolwide action plan adequately addresses the critical areas for follow-up, with the exception of a major concern for the Visiting Team that the parents and community are not invested in the decision making process. While it is clear that there is some attempt to present documents to the community for review, the Visiting Team was unable to ascertain the level of participation, if any, of the School Community Council in the development of the school action plan.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The faculty and administration seemed aware of and committed to the action plan. The Visiting Team was unable to determine the level of commitment from the community because of a lack of School Community Council and/or focus group parent representatives available to interview during the visit.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The school appears to have a sound plan in place, with appropriate time frames and areas of responsibility outlined. While action plan #1 outlines measurable standards for improvement, action plans #3 and #4 would be strengthened with the addition of measurable expected outcomes. For example, in action plan #4, instead of evaluating the effectiveness of school newsletters by the number of copies printed, the school should determine how many parents are receiving and reading the newsletter. Item one would be strengthened by the addition of benchmark goals, such as increasing PTSA membership by a predetermined percentage each year.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The administration and faculty are to be commended for the high degree of collegiality in the building. Teachers report that they are very happy with their assignment at Churchill and plan on continuing to teach at this school. The teachers are looking forward to working with Principal Holbrook. Assistant Principal Barber is respected and deserves much credit for her leadership during the administrative transition.
- Churchill Junior High is a model school in implementation of Middle School Philosophy. The faculty has been willing depart from tradition in an effort to increase student learning. The interdisciplinary teams are functioning in both academic areas and with student interventions. The faculty seems willing and able to work together to develop innovations, such as block scheduling and ninety minute class periods.
- The atmosphere at Churchill is warm and inviting. Students who live outside the school boundaries, as well as students who now attend Churchill because of membership in alternative programs, report that they are welcomed and feel a part of the school.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that Churchill increase and sustain parent/community involvement in the self-study process. While it was evident that parents were involved in the first drafts of the mission statement, beliefs, DRSLs, and Action Plans for the first accreditation visit, the Visiting Team was concerned by a lack of continuing parent/community involvement.
- In light of the new groups of students that are currently assigned to Churchill, the school should continue to refine its self-study document by collecting additional data, and disaggregating and analyzing student data. This process should involve both staff and community participation.
- Since the staff has invested time in creation of elaborate rubrics to measure the DRSLs, the Visiting Team recommends that the faculty revisit these rubrics, refine them if necessary, and develop a plan to incorporate their use schoolwide.
- The Visiting Team recognizes and applauds the leadership provided by the assistant principal, and also recognizes a change in the principal shortly before the

accreditation visit. However, the Visiting Team recommends that future self-studies benefit from strong leadership by the current school principal.